

VAN Kleeck, MARY (BIOGRAPHICAL DATA)

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Miss Mary Van Kleeck is the Director of the Woman in Industry Service of the U. S. Department of Labor. Miss Van Kleeck is particularly fitted to speak of the women in industry in this country as she has been in close touch with their work for many years. Appointed in January, 1918 as Director of the Women's Branch of the Industrial Service Section of the Ordnance Department, she brought to that position a knowledge and experience gained through the investigations of the conditions under which women were working that she had made and directed for seven years while in charge, of the Committee on Women's Work and of the Division of Industrial Studies of the Russel Sage Foundation in New York City.

While with the Ordnance Department from January, 1918 to July, 1918, Miss Van Kleeck supervised the conditions of employment of women in the government arsenals and plants operating under government contract. She thus had the opportunity of safeguarding the women who were being so rapidly recruited into government service by regulating the conditions under which they were employed, at the same time insuring the maximum output of munitions which were so urgently needed by the Army.

In July, 1918, Miss Van Kleeck was summoned from her position in the Ordnance Department to establish the Woman in Industry Service of the Department of Labor. As Director of that Service she has been in close touch with all government agencies and has assisted in the solution of their problems regarding the employment of women. Her position as the only woman member of the War Labor Policies Board has also given her wide influence in the forming of policies for the employment of women.

The Woman in Industry Service was the only one of the War Service activities, not provided for by statutory law, which was recommended for continuation by the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives. In debate on the subject of the appropriation for the Woman in Industry Service which was recommended to and passed by the House of Representatives, Representative Mondell of Wyoming said of Miss Van Kleeck and the Woman in Industry Service " This was the only service among all of the war activities that was not provided for by law that the committee recommended the continuation of. The Committee took the responsibility knowing that the item was not provided for by law, that it was subject to a point of order, because we were impressed with the importance of the work to be carried on, and further we were impressed with the very evident intelligence with which the work had been carried on. It was one of the very few new war bureaus which justified itself beyond any question or controversy. I believe in this work and I believe in those engaged in it."

Although \$150,000 was asked of Congress by the woman in industry Service to continue and expand the work during the coming year, an appropriation of only \$40,000 was passed by the House, and as the entire Sundry Civil Appropriations Bill failed to come up for consideration in the Senate before it adjourned on Monday, March 4th, there is now no provision for the continuation of the work after June 30, 1919.

3/4/1919

BIOGRAPHY MARY VAN KLEECK

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One of the women of America that the war brought into a position of greatest responsibility and prominence is Miss Mary Van Kleeck, Director of the Woman in Industry Service, Department of Labor.

Miss Van Kleeck, who is a native of New York State, was graduated from Smith College, Northampton, Mass., with the degree of A.B. in 1904. For three years she attended the summer courses at the college specializing in economics and other lines of study that later were to be of value in her work for women.

As Secretary of the Sea Breeze Fresh Air Home and Hospital for Tuberculous Children maintained by the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, Miss Van Kleeck began her active career. In 1905-6 she was holder of the Joint Fellowship of the College Settlements Association and the Smith College Alumnae Association. At this beginning of her career she made a thorough investigation of overtime work of factory girls in New York for the College Settlement of the city. The report which was published in Charities and Commons, 1906, attracted ~~the~~ attention to the young student of sociology and the next year, the Fellowship continuing with the cooperation of the New York Child Labor Committee and the Consumer's League, she investigated child labor in the tenements of New York City, the report being published in Charities and Commons 1907.

For the two years 1907-09 Miss Van Kleeck was Industrial Secretary of the Alliance Employment bureau, a philanthropic

agency maintained by settlements and girls' clubs in New York for the purpose of finding work for girls in shops and offices. Here she used her knowledge and experience in directing investigations, the results of which were published in book form by the Russel Sage Foundation, under the titles, "Women in the Bookbinding Trade" and "A Seasonal Industry, a Study of the Millinery Trade in New York". These surveys, important in themselves led to larger enterprises that were soon to mean much to the progress of women. In 1908-9 the Russel Sage Foundation became so interested that it financed the work, which in 1909 was organized as the Committee on Women's Work, an independent organization which a year later was taken over as a department of the Foundation's activities. In 1916 the Committee became the Division of Industrial Studies. Having been chosen to direct the Committee on Women's Work, Miss Van Kleeck was appointed Director of the Division on Industrial Studies and in this position directed investigations leading to the following reports: "Working Girls in Public Evening Schools", "Artificial Flower Makers", "Italian Girls in Industry in New York", "The Burden of Sickness in Wage-earner's Families and "Collective Bargaining in the Cigar Trade", the last three of which, written by members of Miss Van Kleeck's staff, are not yet published, although the report on "Italian Girls in Industry" is now in press.

After the entrance of the United States into the War Miss Van Kleeck investigated conditions, in view of the possible employment in the storage depots of the U.S. Army. This work was undertaken for the Storage Committee of the War Industries Board and the report was published as the committees Bulletin No. 9. The report

contains the recommendation that a Woman's Bureau should be organized in the War Department.

From January to July, 1918, Miss Van Kleeck served as Director of the Women's Branch of the Industrial Service Section of the Ordnance Department, U.S. Army, and was summoned from that position to establish the Woman in Industry Service of the Department of Labor. Since July, 1918, when she assumed the duties of her new office as Director of the Service, Miss Van Kleeck has been identified with all problems relating to women workers, in which the Government is interested. She formulated for the approval of the Secretary of Labor, "Standards Governing the Employment of Women in Industry", which contains the most advanced ideals. These standards include the eight-hour day with half holiday on Saturday, prohibition of night work, rest periods, equal pay for equal work, the best possible sanitation and general working conditions, safety devices, and they recommend care in determining the selection of occupation so that lifting, constant standing, exposure to excessive heat or to dust and fumes or occupational poisons may be avoided. According to these standards, approved by the Secretary "no work shall be given out to be done in room used for living or sleeping purposes or in rooms directly connected with living or sleeping rooms in any dwelling or tenement."

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Smithson. Nat. Institution of Social Sciences

May 9th 1919.

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Miss Mary Van Kleeck, director of the Woman in Industry Service of the U. S. Department of Labor, was appointed when the Service was first organized in July, 1918. She came to this position from the Ordnance Department where she had been chief of the Woman's Division of the Industrial Service Section. While with the Ordnance Department from January, 1918 to July, 1918, Miss Van Kleeck supervised the conditions of employment of women in the Government arsenals and plants operating under Government contract. She thus had the opportunity of safeguarding the women who were being so rapidly recruited into the Government service by regulating the conditions under which they were employed, at the same time insuring the maximum output of munitions which were so urgently needed by the Army.

As Director of the Woman in Industry Service she has been in close touch with all government agencies and has assisted in the solution of their problems regarding the employment of women. Her position as the only woman member of the War Labor Policies Board gave her wide influence in the forming of policies for the employment of women. The standards for the employment of women in industry which were formulated by the Woman in Industry Service and adopted by the War Labor Policies Board are being widely used as guides by employers and by organizations working for the betterment of conditions for working women.

In addition to establishing standards for general conditions, the employment of women under unusual circumstances has been considered by this Service. Special studies have been made of women working in the chemical industries of one city, of the women in the metal trades in one State, of women candy makers in another city, and of the employment of negro women in industry. Assistance has been given in several States with a view towards recommending or furthering improved legislation. The Service also has an advisory relation with the War and Navy Departments regarding the conditions affecting the employment of women in Government arsenals and navy yards.

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

WOMAN IN INDUSTRY SERVICE

WASHINGTON

BIOGRAPHY of MISS MARY VAN KLEECK.

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Graduated 1900-- Smith College, Northampton, Mass. 1900--1904--
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(The last three reports were not written by Mary Van Kleeck but by members of the Staff)

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